SURVEY REPORT

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavorial and Social Sciences

Women in the Army: Officer Career Plans, Reasons for Leaving, and Trends in Attitudes

Presented to the
Defense Department Advisory Committee
on Women in the Services

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Women in the Army: The Branches

(16% of Active Component Commissioned Officers Are Female)

Combat Arms

- Air Defense Artillery (14%)
- Corps of Engineers (13%)
- Aviation (8%)
- Field Artillery (1%)
- Infantry, Armor, Special Forces (0%)

Combat Support

- Chemical (24%)
- Military Police (22%)
- Signal (21%)
- Military Intelligence (19%)

Combat Service Support

- Adjutant General (37%)
- Finance (29%)
- Transportation (22%)
- Quartermaster (21%)
- Ordnance (20%)

Medical Branches

- Army Nurse Corps (65%)
- Veterinary Corps (36%)
- Medical Service (23%)
- Medical Specialist (19%)
- Medical Corps (10%)

Briefing Overview

Part 1: Comparisons of Career Plans of Female and Male Officers

Part 2: Survey Data on Reasons Why Female and Male Officers Leave the Army Before Retirement

Part 3: Trends in Attitudes About Women in the Army

Source: *Sample Survey of Military Personnel (SSMP)*

Conducted twice a year (spring & fall) of the Active component Army

Stratified samples by rank

About 8,000-9,000 respondents

(4,000+ officers, 4,000+ enlisted)

Measures of career intent and well-being included in each survey

Women in the Army (WITA) items included:

Fall 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2001

Part 1

Comparisons of Career Plans of Female and Male Officers

“Career Intent” Plans[1]

The same question (with six response categories) is asked in each SSMP:

“Which ONE of the following describes your current active duty Army career intentions?”

Retire = “Probably/Definitely stay in until retirement.”

Not sure = “Probably/Definitely stay beyond my present obligation, but not necessarily to retirement.”

Get out = “Probably/Definitely leave upon completion of my present obligation.”

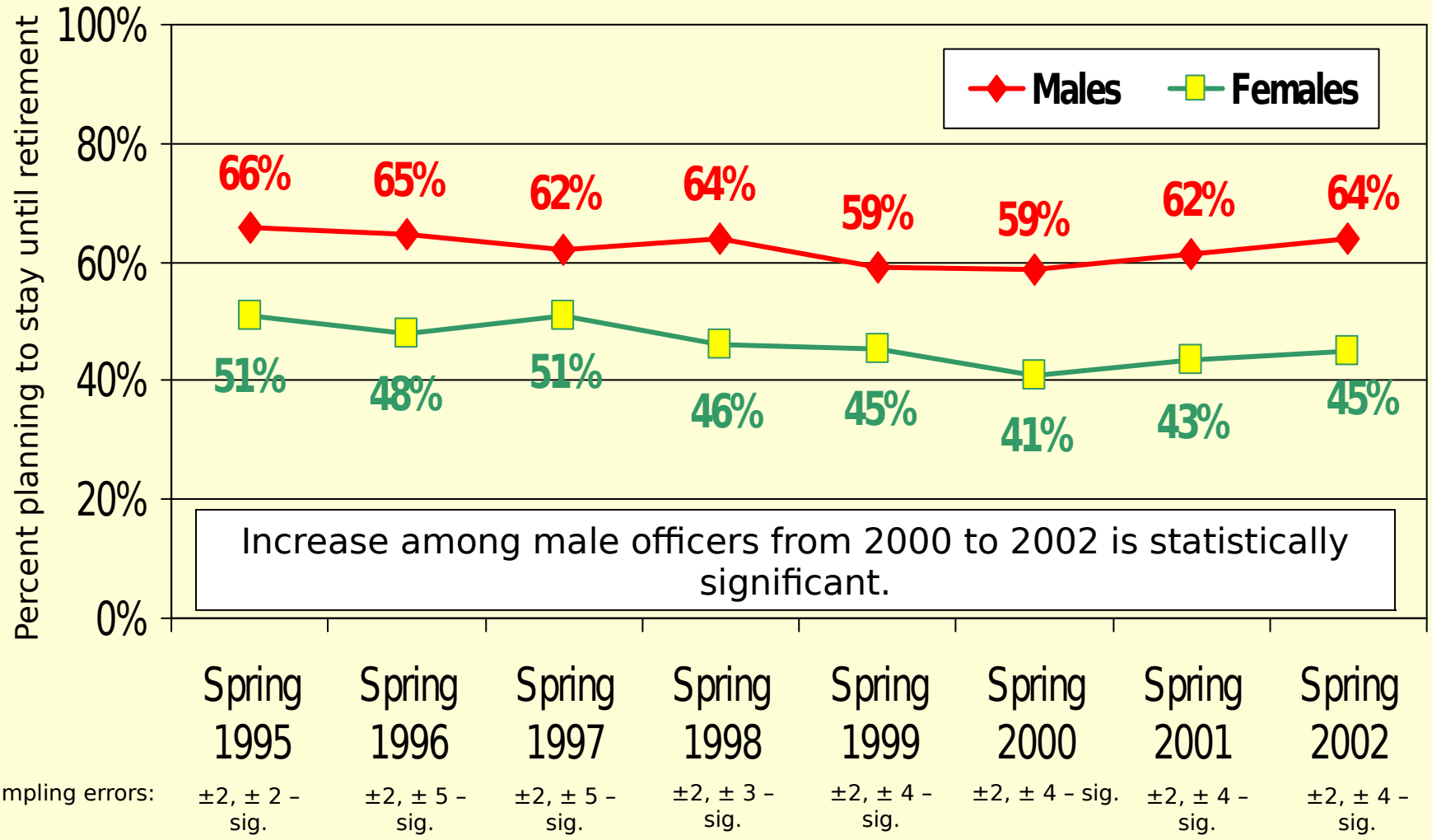
[1] Official retention/attrition data are maintained by the U.S. Total Army Personnel

Stay in: 1995 – 2002 Findings

- **Propensity to stay in the Active component Army until retirement continues to be higher for male than for female officers.**

- **After declines from 1995 to 1999/2000 for males and from 1995/1997 to 2000 for females, there have been small increases in propensity to stay – from 59% to 64% in 2002 for males and from 41% to 45% in 2002 for females (but the increase for females is not statistically significant).**

Planning to Stay Until Retirement
All Commissioned Officers – 1995 - 2002



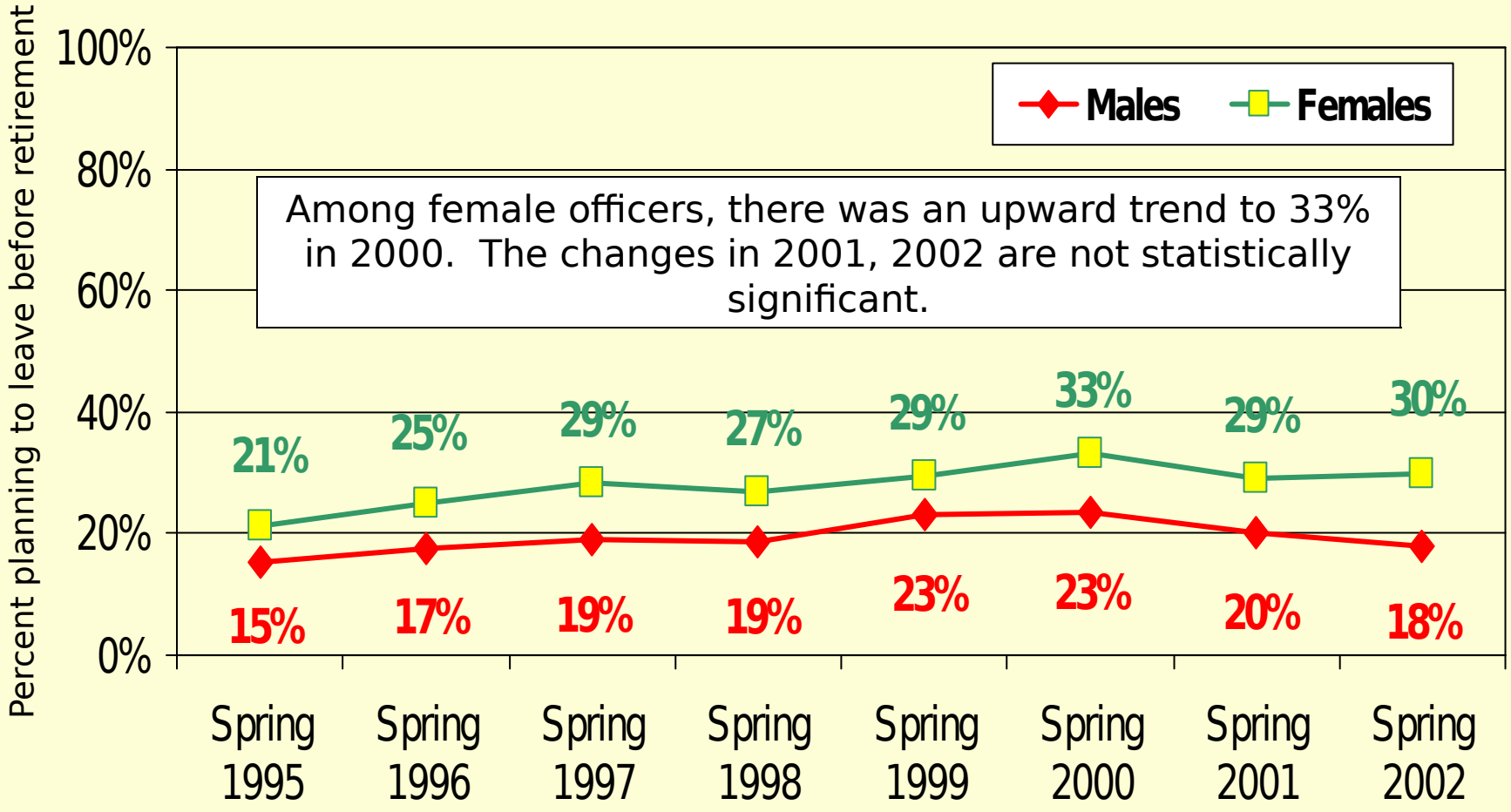
Sampling errors:	±2, ± 2 – sig.	±2, ± 5 – sig.	±2, ± 5 – sig.	±2, ± 3 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – sig.

Leave: 1995 – 2002 Findings

- **Propensity to probably/definitely leave the Army upon completion of obligation (before retirement) continues in 2002 to be higher for female (30%) than for male (18%) officers.**

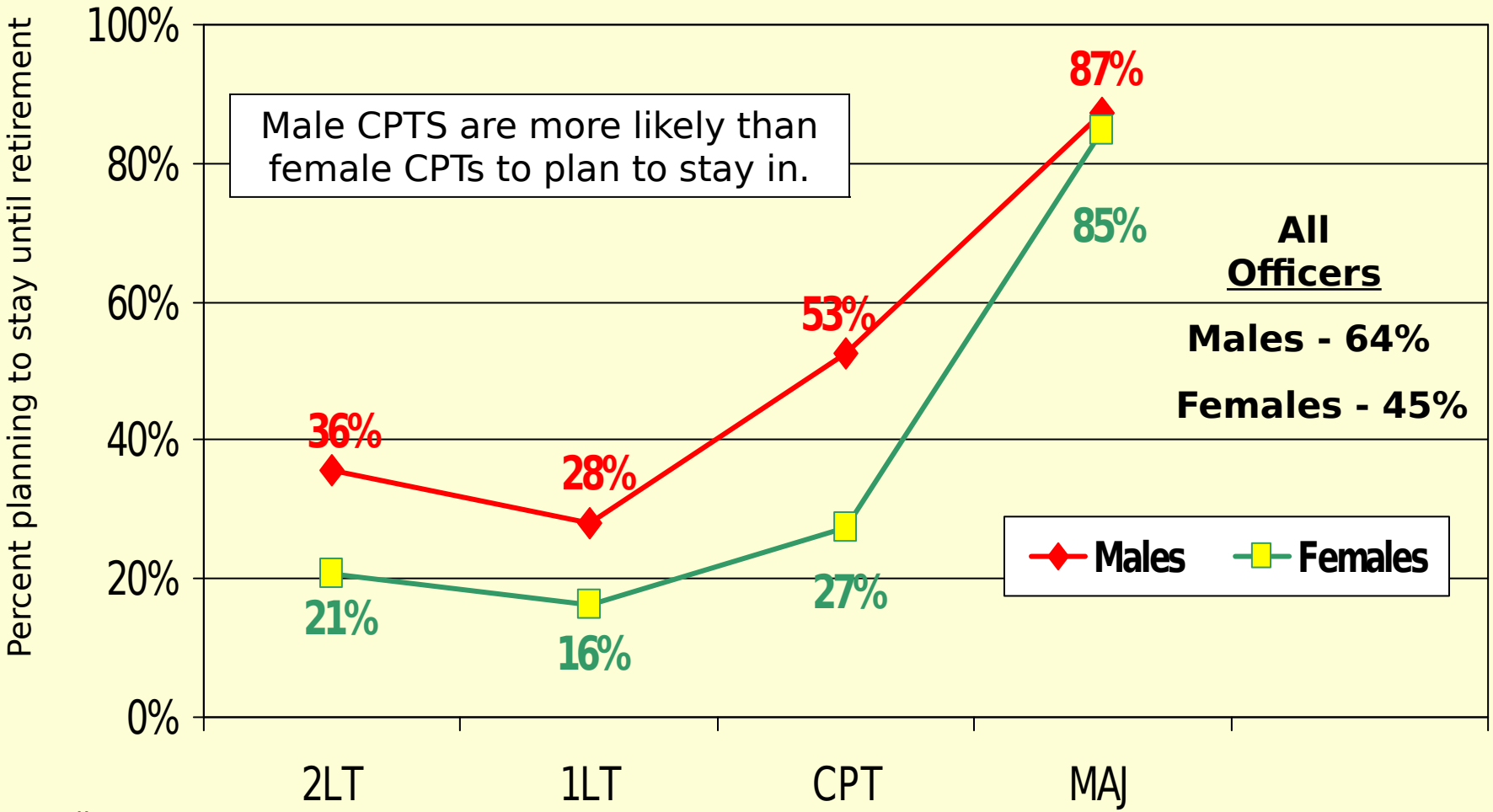
- **After increases from 1995 to 2000 in plans to leave before retirement, there has been a decline from 2000 to 2002 (statistically significant only for male officers).**

Planning to Leave Before Retirement
All Commissioned Officers – 1995 - 2002



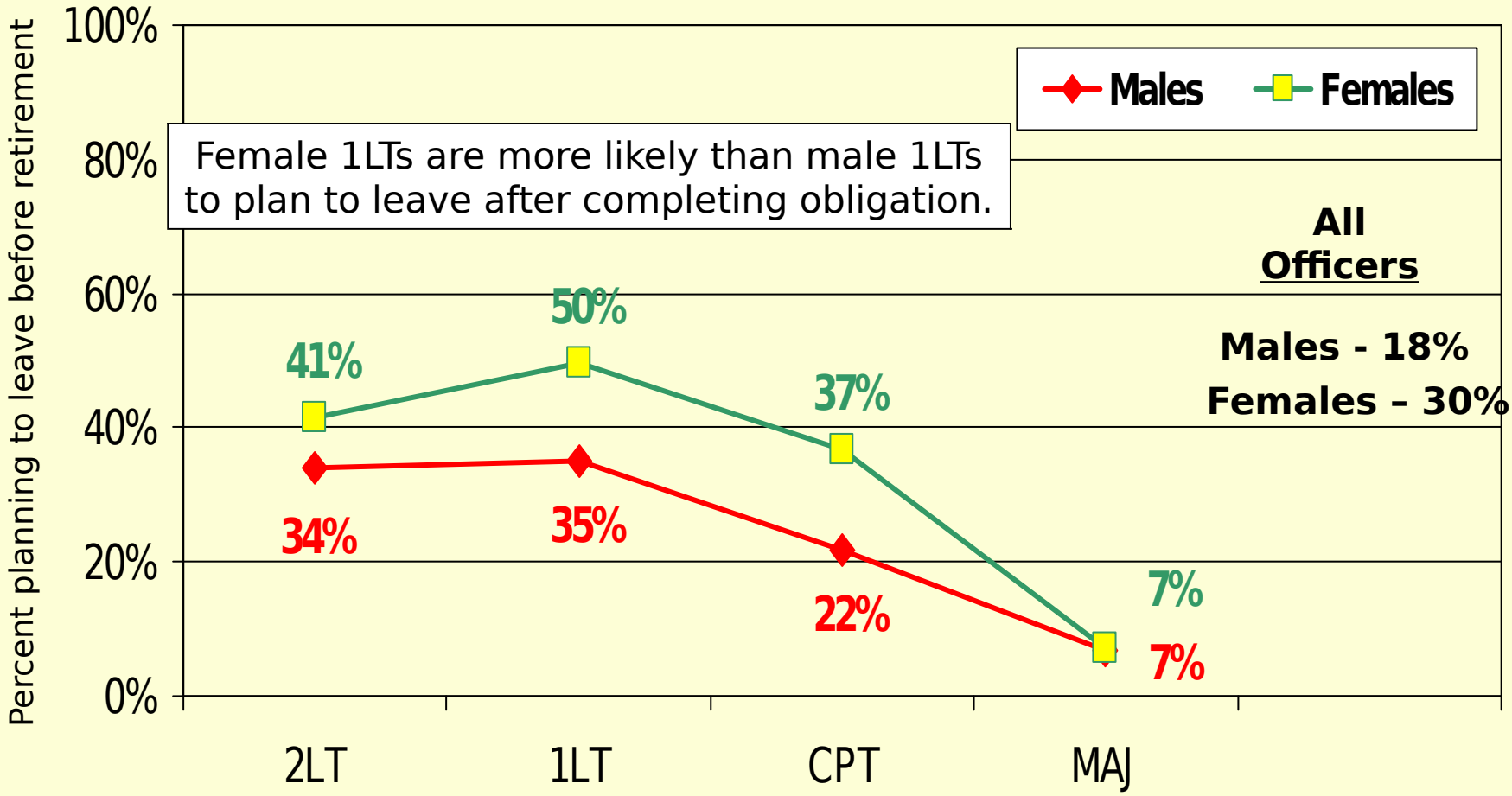
Sampling errors:	±2, ± 2 – sig.	±2, ± 5 – sig.	±2, ± 5 – sig.	±2, ± 3 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – n.s.	±2, ± 4 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – sig.	±2, ± 4 – sig.

Stay Until Retirement - Spring 2002
2LT, 1LT, CPT and MAJ



Sampling errors: ± 6, ±9 – n.s. ±5, ±8 – n.s. ± 5, ±10 – sig. ±4, ±11 – n.s. ±2, ±4 – sig.

Leave Before Retirement - Spring 2002
2LT, 1LT, CPT and MAJ



Sampling errors: ±6, ±9 – n.s. ±5, ±8 – sig. ± 5, ±10 – n.s. ±4, ±11 – n.s. ±2, ±4 – sig.

Part 2

Survey Data on Reasons Why Female and Male Officers Leave the Army Before Retirement

SSMP Overall Findings

Male and female officers are more similar than different in their attitudes about many of 58 aspects of Army life (job satisfaction, well-being) measured by the SSMP.

Compared to male officers, female officers generally are more concerned about their career opportunities in the Army (such as their assignments and use of skills) and factors related to family life.

2002 SSMP Findings – 1

Of those officers thinking of or planning to leave the Army before retirement. . .

Most Important Reason	Females	Males
Amount of time separated from family	24.8%	11.7%
Amount of enjoyment from my job	9.8%	10.4%
Level of job fulfillment/challenge	7.2%	7.0%
Overall quality of Army life	5.6%	7.5%
Quality of leadership at my place of duty	5.2%	4.5%
Amount of pay (basic)	4.6%	

2002 SSMP Findings – 2

Female officers are more satisfied with. . .

Amount of pay (basic) (females – 76%; males – 68%)

Retirement benefits (75% vs. 68%)

Amount of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) (66% vs. 54%)

Number of PCS relocations (75% vs. 67%)

Quality of family medical care (75% vs. 59%)

Availability of family medical care (71% vs. 57%)

Living conditions stateside (75% vs. 67%)

2002 SSMP Findings – 3

Male officers are more satisfied with. . .

Availability of Army Youth Services (males – 78%; females – 64%)

Availability of Army Child Care Programs (59% vs. 45%)

Quality of leadership at your (my) place of duty (72.2% vs. 65.6%)

Amount of time separated from family (58% vs. 49%)

2002 SSMP Findings – 4

- Male officers are more likely to report that they are confident that they will get the assignments they need to be competitive for promotion (males – 55%; females – 48%)

- Female officers are more likely to report that they will **NOT** get the assignments that match their skills and interests (females – 35%; males – 28%)

2002 SSMP Findings – 5

Female officers are more reluctant to accept. . .

Number of weeks typically spent away from home (females – 32%; males – 23%)

Number of unaccompanied tours during a career (50% vs. 41%)

Amount of control over the timing of trips/ assignments that take you away from home (42% vs. 31%)

Frequency personal or family plans would be disrupted by job demands/Army requirements (50% vs. 40%)

Part 3

Trends in Attitudes About Women in the Army

Women in the Army (WITA) items

50+ items rotated over time

SSMP results presented on these topics:

- **Gender relationships at work**
- **Unit cohesion and work atmosphere**
- **Army demands**

Table 1. Comparison Groups

Males by Rank

Officers

Company Grade
(2LT, 1LT, CPT)

Field Grade
(MAJ, LTC, COL)

Enlisted

Junior Enlisted[1]
(PV2, PFC, CPL/SPC)

Junior NCOs
(SGT, SSG)

Senior NCOs
(SFC, MSG, 1SG,
SGM, CSM)

[1] PV1s not surveyed.

Table 2. Selected WITA Items

Gender Relationships at Work

- Overall work/professional relationship between males/females in unit
- Taking orders from a member of the opposite sex

Group Cohesion/Work Atmosphere

- Impact of unit gender integration on group cohesion
- Impact of unit gender integration on work atmosphere

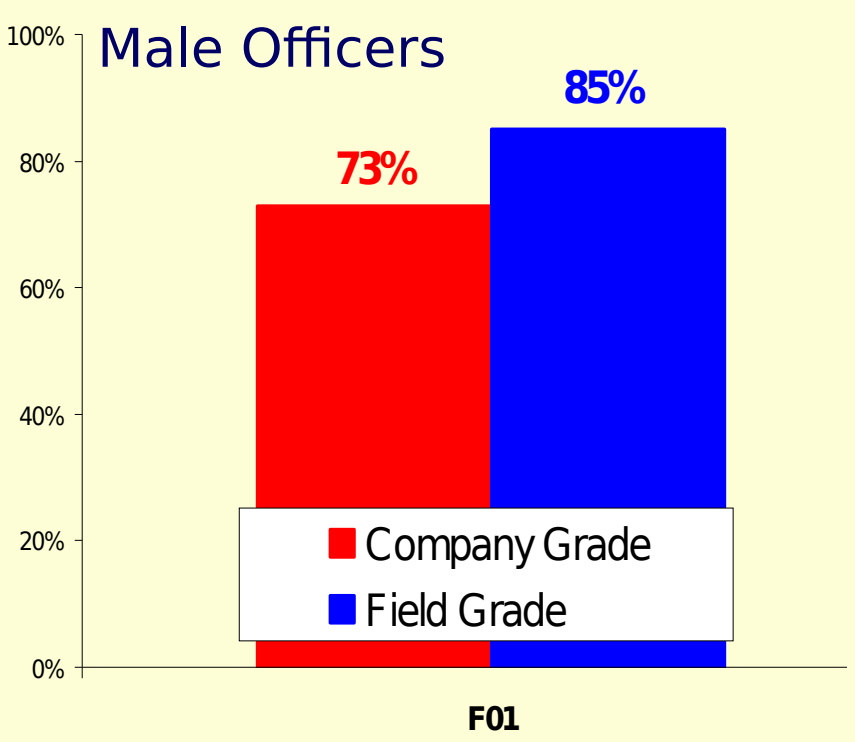
Army Demands

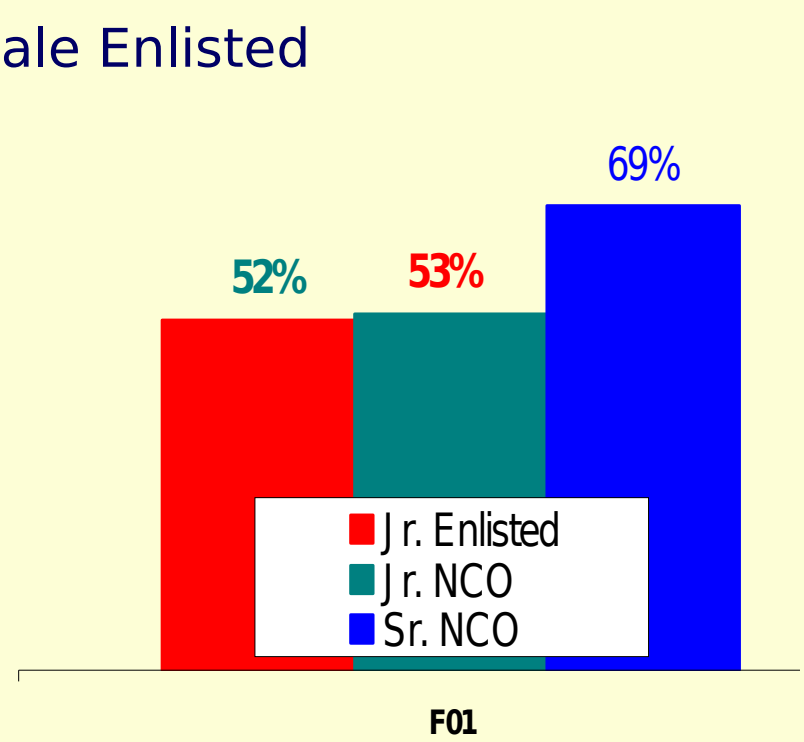
- Physical demands of being an Army soldier
- Physical demands of handling current job

Working/Professional Relationships and Taking Orders

"Overall, the working/professional relationship between men and women in my unit is . . ."

VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT.





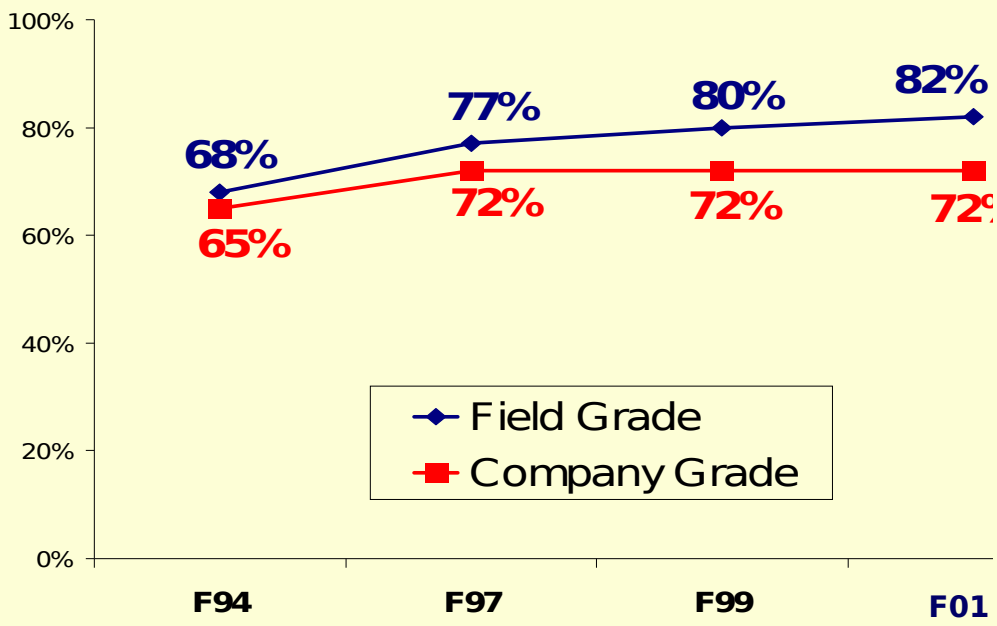
NOTE: Soldiers in units without both males and females are excluded.

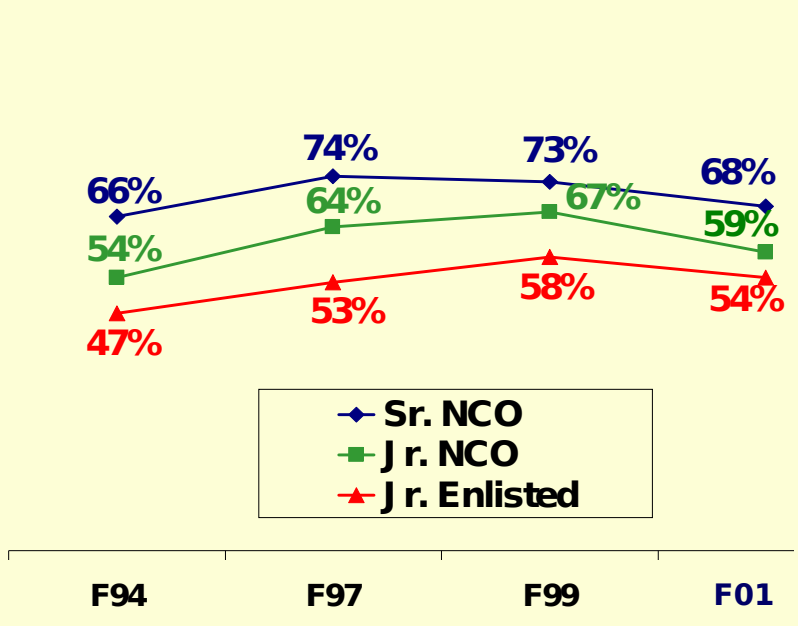
Company Grade se = +/-3%
Field Grade se = +/-3%

Jr. Enlisted se = +/-3%
Jr. NCOs se = +/-3%
Sr. NCOs se = +/-3%

"It would be more difficult to take orders from someone of the opposite sex (gender)."

Male officers and enlisted who DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE





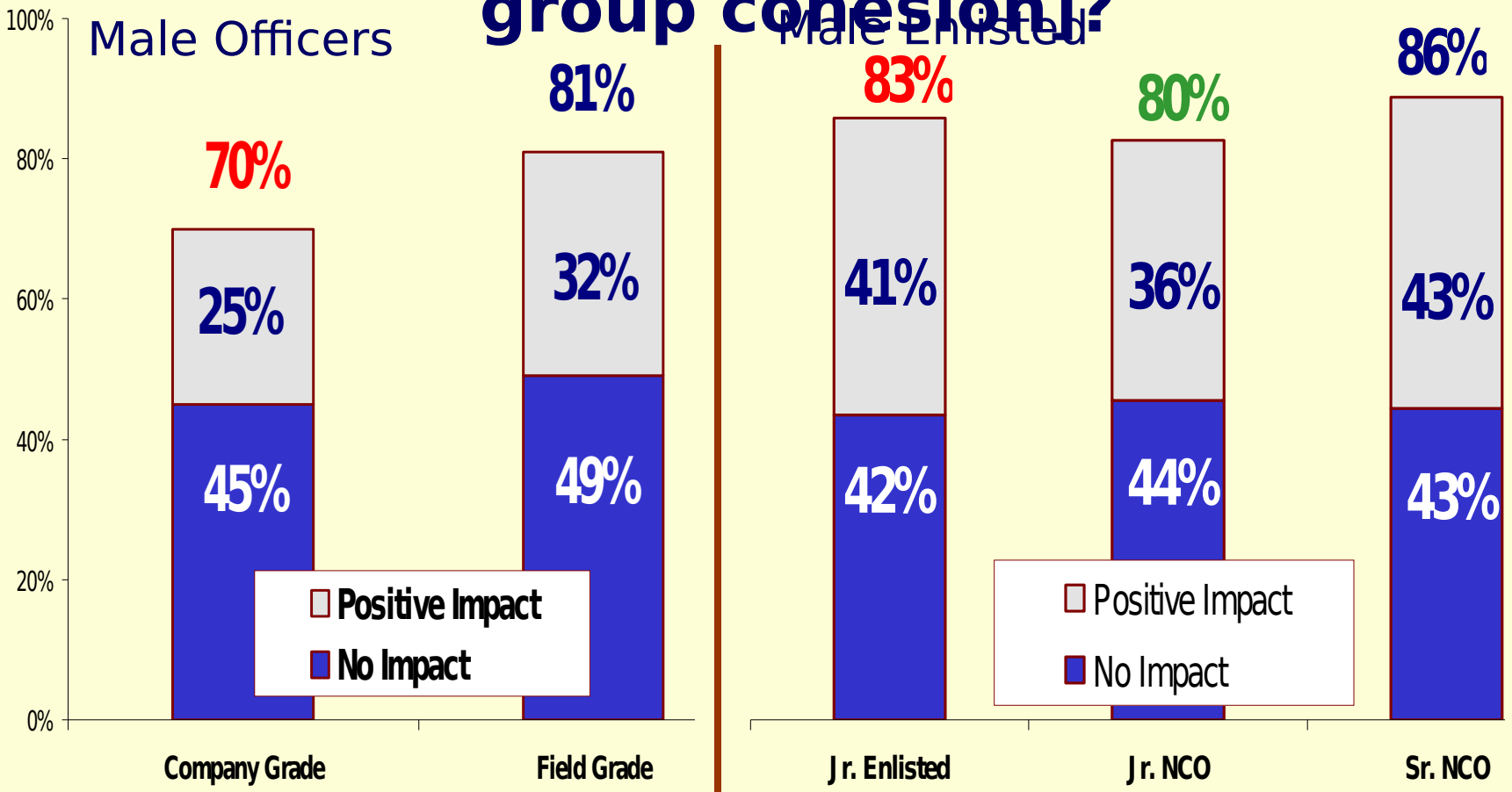
NOTE: Responses from soldiers in Combat Arms units are included.

Company Grade se = +/-2% 3% 3% 3%
Field Grade se = +/-3% 2% 2% 3%

Jr. Enlisted se = +/-2% 3% 3% 3%
Jr. NCOs se = +/-3% 4% 3% 3% sig
Sr. NCO se = +/-3% 3% 2% 3%

Group Cohesion and Work Atmosphere

"Having both males and females in a unit has/ would have…" [what impact on group cohesion]?

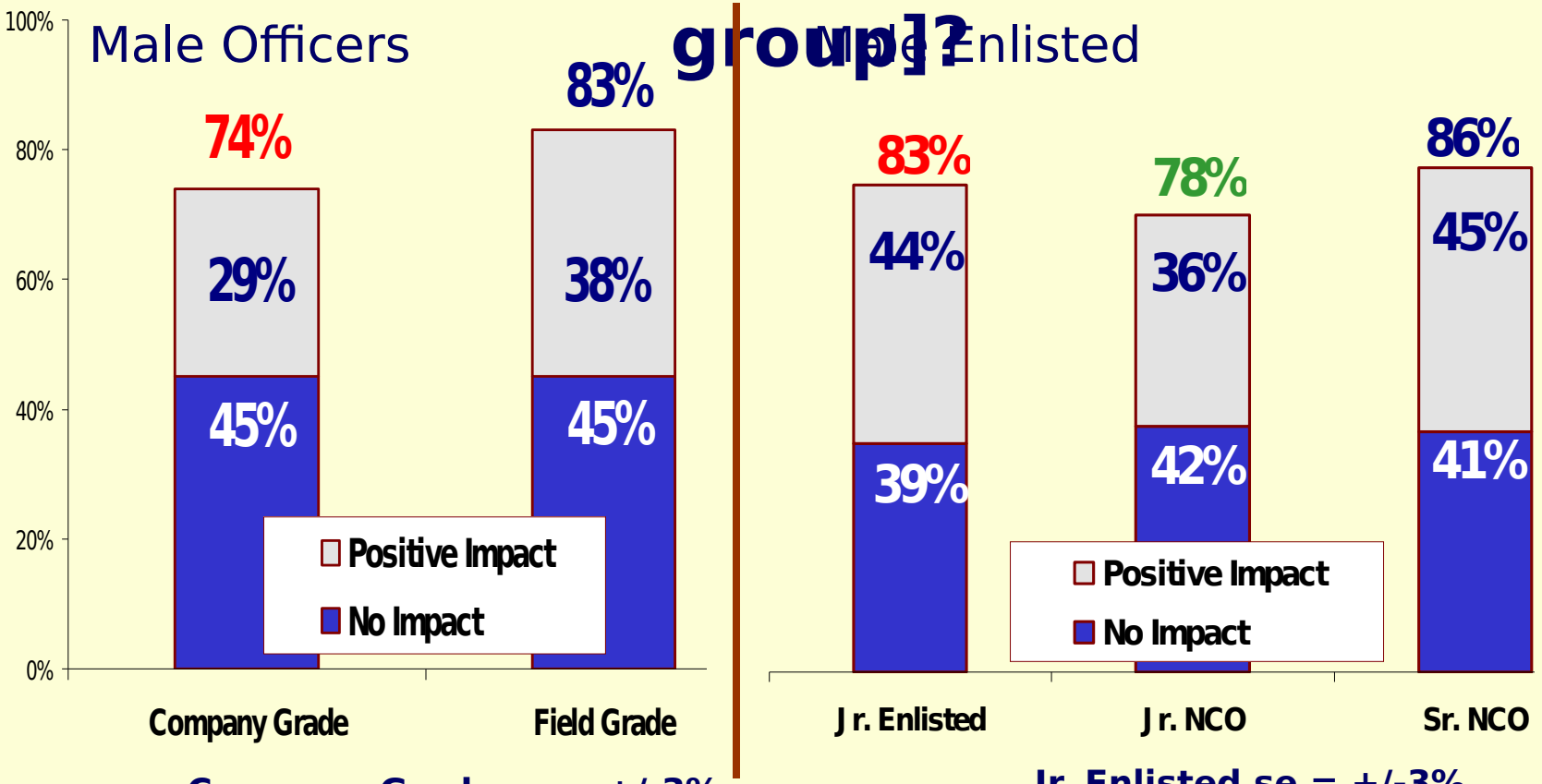


Company Grade se = +/-3%
Field Grade se = +/-3%

2002 SSMP

Jr. Enlisted se = +/-3%
Jr. NCOs se = +/-3%
Sr. NCOs se = +/-3%

"Having both males and females in a unit has/ would have…" [what impact on the work atmosphere of the group]?



Company Grade se = +/-3%
Field Grade se = +/-3%

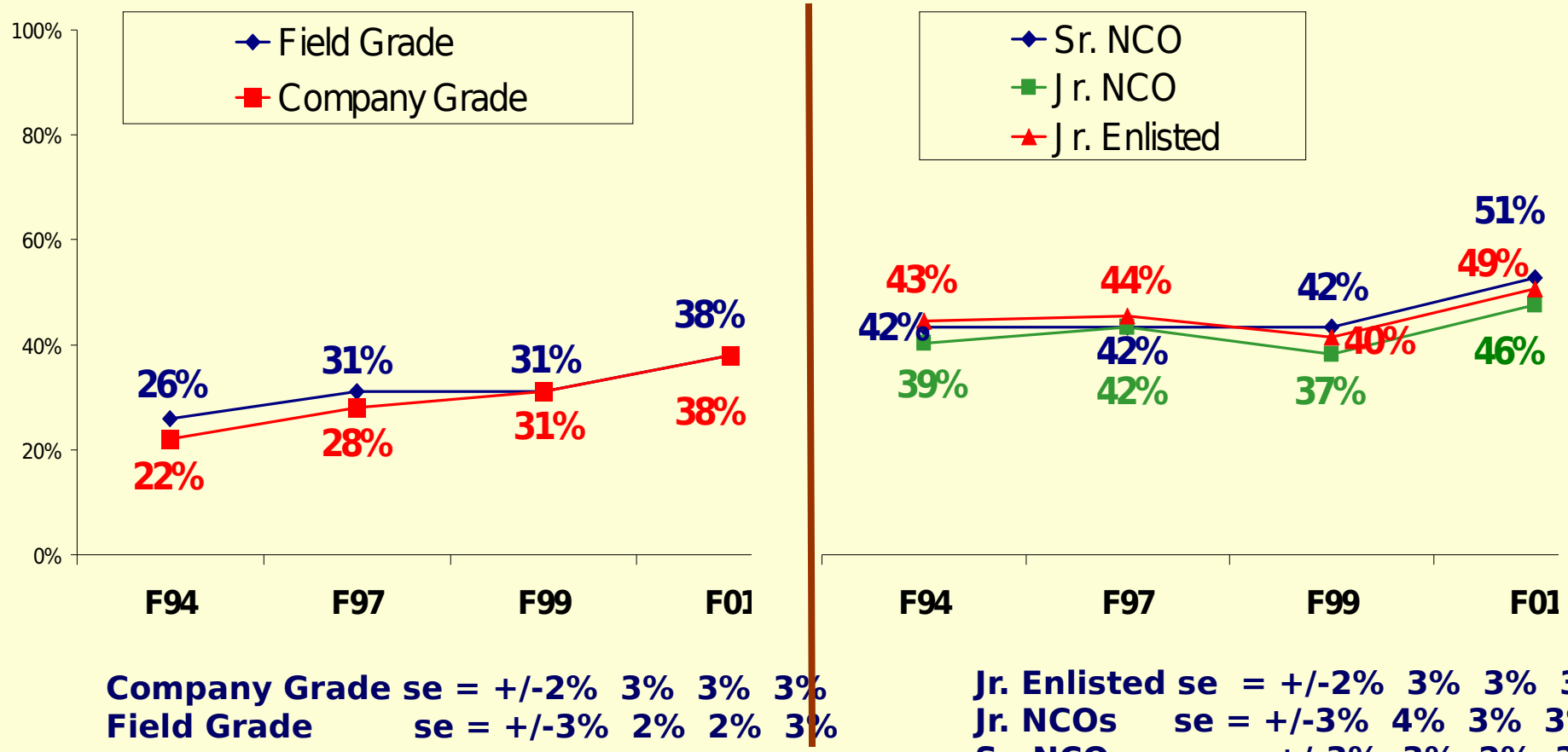
Jr. Enlisted se = +/-3%
Jr. NCOs se = +/-3%
Sr. NCOs se = +/-3%

2002 SSMP

Army Demands

"Females are just as able as males to meet the physical demands of being an Army soldier."

Male officers and enlisted who AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE

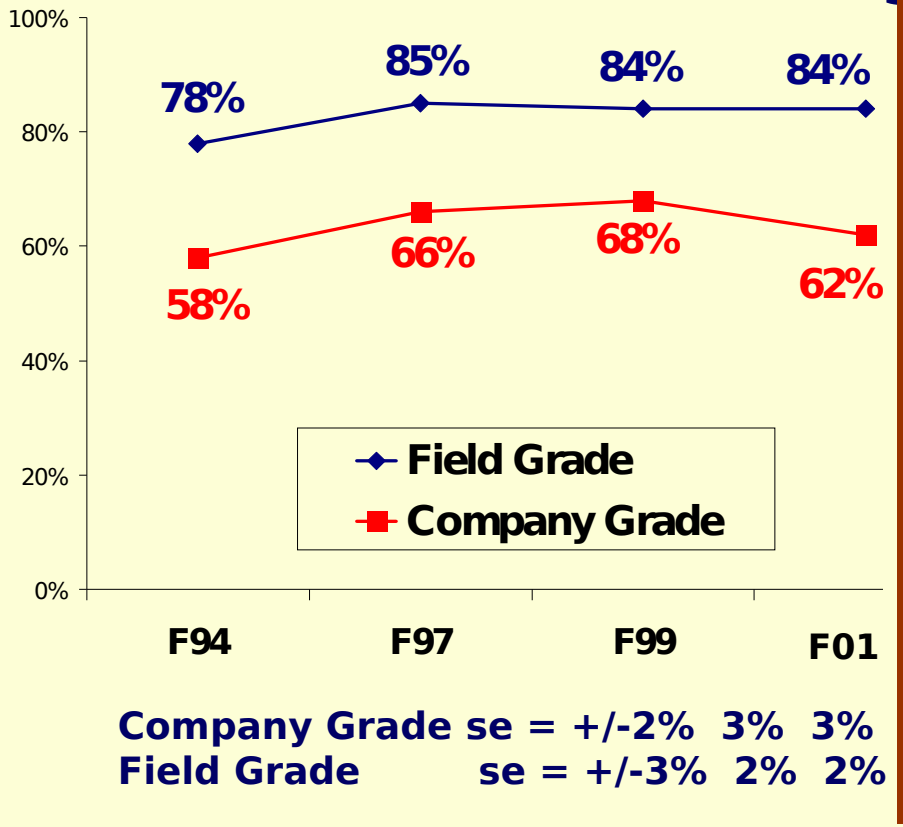


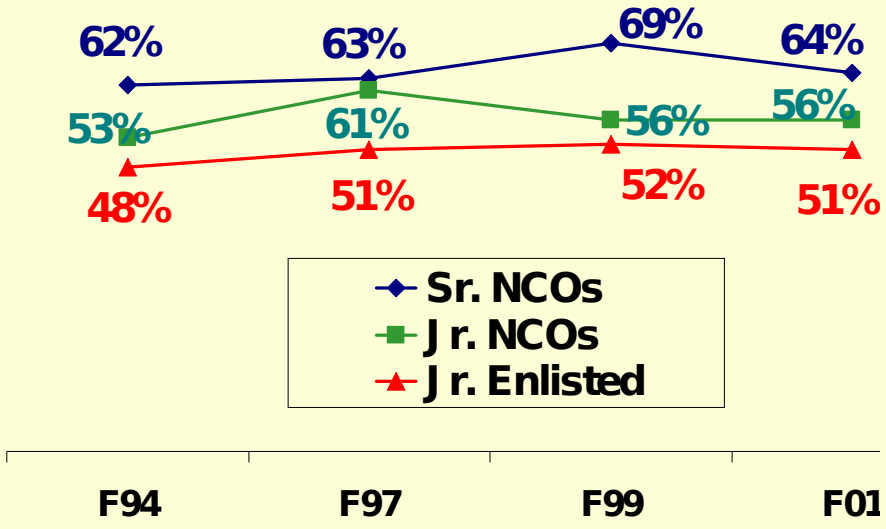
Company Grade se = +/-2% 3% 3% 3%
Field Grade se = +/-3% 2% 2% 3%

Jr. Enlisted se = +/-2% 3% 3% 3%
Jr. NCOs se = +/-3% 4% 3% 3%
Sr. NCOs se = +/-3% 3% 2% 3%

"Considering the physical demands of my current job, female soldiers are or would be just as capable as male soldiers of handling my job."

Male officers and enlisted who AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE





Company Grade	se = +/-2%	3%	3%	3%
Field Grade	se = +/-3%	2%	2%	3%

Jr. Enlisted	se = +/-2%	3%	3%	3%
Jr. NCOs	se = +/-3%	4%	3%	3%
Sr. NCOs	se = +/-3%	3%	2%	3%

Summary of Findings – 1

- Female officers are more likely than male officers to plan to leave the Army before retirement.
- Differences in career plans of female and male officers have remained somewhat parallel since 1995.
- Overall, there have been slight increases in 2001 and 2002 in propensity to stay in the Army until

Summary of Findings – 2

- Female officers are more likely than male officers to be concerned about their career opportunities and to plan to leave the Army because of the amount of time separated from family.

- Satisfaction levels with most aspects of Army life and their reasons for leaving the Army before retirement are somewhat similar for female and male officers.

Summary of Findings – 3

- Although a majority of both male officers and enlisted personnel report that female soldiers are just as capable of handling their (the males') jobs, there are continuing concerns about women being able to meet the physical demands of being a soldier.

Summary of Findings – 4

- Positive changes in some male attitudes about women in the Army have slowed since the mid-1990s.

- Senior officers and enlisted personnel are more likely to hold more positive attitudes about women in the Army.

Sample Survey of Military Personnel

The first Army-wide sample survey of soldiers was conducted in December 1943. Since then, the survey has been conducted regularly, first as the *Personnel Survey of the Army* and since 1958 as the *Sample Survey of Military Personnel (SSMP).*

The SSMP collects information on a wide range of issues important to the Army, Active component soldiers, and their dependent family members. Army agencies and commands request the questions that are included in the SSMP. The results of the survey are used by Army policy makers to assess soldier and family well-being, develop plans, assess policies, and evaluate program operations and outcomes.

The population for the SSMP consists of all permanent party, Active component Army personnel (commissioned officers, warrant officers, and enlisted personnel [excluding all PV1 and those PV2 soldiers in Europe and Korea]). Samples of about 10% of officers and 2-3% of enlisted personnel are drawn using the final 1 or 2 digits of soldiers' social security numbers. Since Spring 1992, the data bases have included approximately 4,000 each for officers and enlisted personnel. Data at each rank level are weighted up to Army strength at the time each survey is conducted. The most recent SSMP – *Spring 2002 SSMP* – was conducted from about 15 April to 7 August 2002. Completed responses were received from 4,216 officers and 4,489 enlisted personnel. Inquiries for additional information should be directed to Chief, Army Personnel Survey Office, U.S. Army Research Institute, 5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22333-5600, commercial (703) 617-7801, DSN 767-7801, or email ARI-APSO@ARI.Army.Mil.